Officers vacancies in Indian Navy

3383. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of posts in the Officers grade are lying vacant in the Indian Navy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Some posts in the officers grade in Indian Navy are vacant. While vacancies in the rank of Commodore/Captain is 4.2%, the vacancy in the rank of Commander is 11.3%. The vacancy in the rank of Lt. Commander and below is 14.2%. In addition, one vacancy of Vice Admiral has been kept as a result of Court directions. The overall shortage of officers is 13%.

The vacancies have arisen on account of retirements, sanction for additional posts of 403 officers in various ranks, which is to be filled up over a five year period, etc.

Naval HQrs have initiated various measures to make good the existing shortage by the year 2003-2004. This, inter alia, includes increased intake of trainees for both normal entry and Short Service Commission. In addition, periodical advertisements in the print and electronic media are given to attract the youth to join Indian Navey.

Purchase of unmanned planes from Israel

3384. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to purchase unmanned planes from Israel to keep an eye on Pak intrusion of Border; and

(b) if so, by when the deal would be finalised and the planes acquired?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are being procured form Israel for various surveillance tasks.

(b) A contract has since been concluded for purchase of UAVs for the Air Force. Procurement of UAVs for Army and Navy is in process.